

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01662 041416Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

/060 W

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R 031735Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDKN4830

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1662

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP, US, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS ON SPAIN

1. DURING COURTESY CALL ON ME MARCH 3 NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR DENIAU TOLD ME THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO PLACE HIMSELF AT DISPOSITION OF SPANISH TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE. HE DID NOT INTEND TO PRESS THE SPANISH AND HE RECOGNIZED THAT THEY WERE NOT TOO RESPONSIVE TO OUTSIDE ADVISE. HE INDICATED THAT THE FRENCH FOREIGN OFFICE BELIEVED THAT THE SPANISH WERE MOVING TOO SLOWLY ON THEIR REFORM PROGRAM AND THAT IF THEY DID NOT STEP UP THE MOMENTUM THERE WOULD BE TROUBLE NOT ONLY WITHIN SPAIN BUT ALSO FROM OTHER EUROPEANS. HE ALSO SAID THAT SOME GROUPS IN PARIS WERE CONCERNED THAT THE KING WAS TOO FAR REMOVED FROM THE POLITICAL PROCESS. DENIAU SAID THAT HIS OWN BELIEF WAS THAT THE SPANISH SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED NOT TO MOVE OVERLY FAST BUT RATHER TO SET A PROGRAM AND THEN MOVE FORWARD AT A REGULAR ALBEIT, DELIBERATE PACE. HE THOUGH IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE CLEAR PROOF OF REFORM PROGRESS NO LATER THAN THE END OF THE SUMMER.

2. I TOLD DENIAU THAT OUR POSITION WHICH HAS BEEN CLEARLY SET FORTH TO THE SPANISH WAS THAT WHATEVER PROGRAM WAS DEVELOPED MUST BE A SPANISH ONE THAT WE
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PAGE 02 MADRID 01662 041416Z

HAD NO PRESCRIPTION TO OFFER. WE TOOK THE VIEW THAT

THERE SHOULD BE GRADUAL BUT SUSTAINED PROGRESS AND WE
THOUGH IT WAS A MISTAKE FOR THE EUROPEANS TO PUSH THE
SPANISH TOO HARD AND TOO FAST SINCE IT HAD TO BE RE-
MEMBERED THAT ON EMERGING FROM 39 YEARS OF PERSONAL
RULE THE SYSTEM COULD NOT TOLERATE ABRUPT OR RADICAL
CHANGES. I SAID THAT IT WAS MY VIEW THAT THE KING DID
WELL NOT TO ENGAGE HIMSELF IN THE POLITICAL DETAILS BUT
RATHER WORK BEHIND THE SCENES IN HELPING TO MAINTAIN A
CERTAIN MOMENTUM IN THE REFORM PROGRAM. I ADDED THAT
BASED ON WHAT DENIAU HAD SAID I THOUGHT THE FRENCH AND
US POSITIONS WERE CLOSE.

3. DENIAU SAID THAT FROM HIS CONTACTS WITH THE EC
IN BRUSSELS HE BELIEVED THAT THE QUESTION OF HOW
THE SPANISH HANDLED THE TRADE UNION PROBLEM WOULD BE A
KEY ONE. THERE WERE ALREADY GRUMBLINGS ABOUT THIS AND
HE PERSONALLY SAW SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC A LONG
WAY OFF.

4. ASKED ABOUT A POSSIBLE VISIT BY THE KING TO FRANCE,
DENIAU ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE
BUT SAID THAT NO DATE HAD YET BEEN SET. HOWEVER HE
HINTED THAT DATES IN JUNE WERE BEING CONSIDERED. (THIS
WOULD ACCORD WITH WHAT AREILZA TOLD ME A FEW DAYS AGO
THAT KING MIGHT GO TO FRANCE FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO THE
UNITED STATES.)
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, PERSONAL OPINION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID01662
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760083-0525
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197603100/aaaadkcr.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAR 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH VIEWS ON SPAIN
TAGS: PFOR, SP, US, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006